

Family Court Phase-in Update

Family Business Court – The current procedure regarding emergency petitions, as outlined in the April 1, 2020 Administrative Order, will remain in effect through May. Beginning in June, matters will be directed to the assigned judge and will be addressed by appointment only, scheduled directly by chambers until full entry into the courthouse is granted.

PFAs– PFA Court will remain cancelled through the month of May with ICCs being conducted on Mondays and Thursdays. Beginning in June, PFA Court will resume with parties reporting to the Courthouse. Lists will be limited to 9 cases per session with staggered start times every 20 mins.

Due to the limited time between cases, only withdrawals, continuances, agreements, and simple hearings will be addressed at this time. Complex matters, depending on the circumstances, will either remain suspended until further access is permitted into the Courthouse or may be scheduled for a special listing upon request. Additional PFA Court sessions will be added to each week, to address the backlog.

Attorneys are encouraged to contact their clients as well as the opposing party, if contact information is available, prior to any PFA proceeding. Withdrawals, continuances, and agreements will be entertained by the Court prior to the scheduled PFA hearing date and removed from the schedule if approved. Motions and agreements may be emailed to Annie Flaud (Flauda@co.lancaster.pa.us) in Court Administration. Chambers will schedule a Lifesize meeting if needed.

Custody

Hearings – Judges continue to hold pre-trial conferences by video/phone. Hearings are currently suspended. Beginning in May, noncomplex matters and those with few witnesses may be considered for video hearings. Once further access is permitted into the Courthouse, hearings will be limited to one hearing per day per judge. Each judge will prioritize their custody cases based on volatility and urgency of the matter.

Custody Conferences – Conferences are currently proceeding by Lifesize. This will remain through May and June.

Divorce

Divorce Hearings/Special Relief – Judge Workman is currently scheduling as needed for telephone/video conferences or hearings. This will remain until full access to the Courthouse is granted.

Divorce Master Conferences/Hearings – Telephonic and pre-trial conferences are currently being conducted by video/telephone and will continue in this manner through May and June. Beginning in June, master hearings will proceed in the Courthouse but will be limited to one case with one divorce master at any given time.

Support

Support Appeals/Contempts – Support Appeals will remain suspended through May. Hearings are set to begin in June and lists will be minimal (no more than 8 per day) with staggered start

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times of 9, 10:30, 1:30 and 3pm with two cases scheduled for each start time. Contempt hearings are currently suspended but are tentatively scheduled to start up in July.

Paternity – There will be one session of Paternity hearings scheduled in June. Cases will be listed with 20 minute staggered start times.

Support Conferences - Domestic Relations has implemented a plan to begin conducting support conferences by telephone starting 5/18. Conferences may continue in this manner for as long as is necessary.

Delinquency Hearings - Most proceedings are currently being conducted by video. Beginning in June, the judges will return to their regularly scheduled sessions of two court days every other week. Hearings will remain by video unless there are extenuating circumstances requiring parties to report to the Courthouse. Regular operations are tentatively set to begin in July.

Masks are required for entry into the Courthouse. Only parties shall attend unless the assigned judge approves additional witnesses.